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Friday, 19 November 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 44 (*continued*)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

Mr. CHEN Jian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations contained in document A/48/536. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his introductory remarks. I would now like to state our views on the question under discussion.

We are pleased to note that since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 in December 1991, during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, coordination of the humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations has been further strengthened, and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played a very important role in this. The operation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the launching of the consolidated appeals have fully shown that the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution has been substantially implemented. We support the efforts made by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in this regard and appreciate the work done by Mr. Eliasson in carrying out resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly.

The Chinese delegation attaches great importance to the activities of humanitarian assistance. We believe that all victims of disasters, natural or man-made, deserve to be assisted generously and in a timely manner by the international community in the spirit of humanitarianism. It should be pointed out that there has been an increasing number of damaging natural disasters in recent years. In his briefing to Member States on 9 November concerning this agenda item, Mr. Eliasson observed that, according to incomplete statistics, the damage caused by natural disasters in 1991 amounted to $44 billion, and the figure for 1992 was as high as $62 billion. This shows that further strengthening of relief assistance to disaster areas has become a serious question which deserves everyone's attention. Of course, attention should also be given to areas stricken by man-made disasters. But where should the priority of assistance work lie? This is a question that merits deep reflection.

The biggest problem in humanitarian assistance is the lack of funds, which is also one of the difficulties encountered in the coordination work. In his briefings, Mr. Eliasson has noted that, as a result of the tremendous loss of life and property caused by various disasters, the need for assistance, especially non-food assistance, is huge. We appeal to all countries capable of doing so to provide, in the spirit of humanitarianism, more assistance and especially non-food assistance so that people in the disaster areas can receive timely relief to alleviate their sufferings.

There is a close relationship between emergency assistance to and the rehabilitation and sustained development of the disaster areas. We are happy to see that this has already attracted attention in responsible

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quarters. We support the idea that the United Nations agencies and donor countries, while providing emergency assistance, should also fully consider the rehabilitation and long-term development of disaster areas. We also support Mr. Eliasson in regard to the need for further strengthening coordination in this connection.

Money is an important means of strengthening coordination. With no money in hand, coordination will remain an empty word. General Assembly resolution 46/182 provides for the setting up of a Central Emergency Revolving Fund of $50 million to ensure sufficient assistance in the initial stages of disasters. This is an important tool for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in strengthening coordination. In view of the Fund's operation over the past year or more, we believe it to be weak in two regards. First, the Fund has not been fully utilized; limits set by various regulations have prevented eligible United Nations agencies from fully utilizing the Fund. Secondly, the total amount of the Fund is too small to respond adequately to the emergency demands created by combating so many disasters in their early stages. We therefore endorse the adoption of more flexible measures in utilizing the Fund and support the increase of the Fund through voluntary contributions.

In coordinating humanitarian assistance activities the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must abide by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as set out in resolution 46/182. In the provision of economic and emergency assistance, the sovereignty of the recipient country must be fully respected. We maintain that no strings should be attached to humanitarian assistance and that the provision of such assistance must be based on the consent of the recipient countries.

Mr. SILALAHI (Indonesia): Let me first express my deep appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for his insightful introduction in the Second Committee to the comprehensive and informative report on the agenda item now before us.

The report prepared by the Under-Secretary-General is in response to resolution 46/182, on strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system. Obviously, as the annex to that resolution reveals, there are many facets and dimensions that must be addressed. Among those that require our close attention are: the guiding principles, areas of prevention and preparedness, the need for ensuring a continuum between short-term and long-term objectives, the recommendations on the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and a central register of specialized personnel and equipment and supplies, as well as other measures designed to enhance the stand-by capacity of emergency relief.

With the end of the cold war, ethnic conflict and violence have returned with a vengeance. Increases in civil strife and underdevelopment have resulted in an unprecedented upsurge in humanitarian emergencies. Those emergencies, combined with the already-increasing natural disasters, environmental degradation, pervasive drought and acute economic conditions, have spread humanitarian crises to vast populations and areas of the world and have severely strained the capacity of the United Nations to handle them. Moreover, we regret to note that humanitarian relief activities are being carried out under increasingly dangerous conditions that have already resulted in relief-worker casualties and even death. The changing scope and nature of those challenges, among others, attest to the relevance of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/168.

We are pleased to witness the ongoing adaptation being made within the United Nations, in keeping with those two resolutions, in meeting such unprecedented challenges. In many of the complex emergencies that are currently plaguing the world, humanitarian assistance has been an integral part of efforts to maintain peace and security. So too the United Nations efforts towards peace-keeping and peace-building have facilitated the access to and delivery of humanitarian assistance. The response of the United Nations, therefore, should involve not only the traditional relief agencies but also the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, so that an integrated, comprehensive and enduring outcome can be achieved. To this end the report underlines the crucial need for an effective mechanism at the heart of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, therefore, must ensure that effective coordination and collaboration take place between those Departments and their agencies.

In addition, and in keeping with the terms of General Assembly resolution 46/182, emergency relief, rehabilitation and development should be treated in an integrated fashion. In this context too we can agree with the Secretary-General on the need to link humanitarian relief with the political aspects of peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Infrastructural requirements, reconstruction and rehabilitation, along with emergency relief, should form a comprehensive, integrated approach linking short-term and long-term goals.

My delegation also fully concurs with the agreed conclusions reached by the Economic and Social Council when it addressed the humanitarian assistance issue at its substantive session in July of this year. In this regard I refer in particular to the need for the Emergency Relief Coordinator to participate fully in the overall planning of

responses of the United Nations to complex emergencies. The Coordinator should also serve as the humanitarian advocate and ensure that the principles of the humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance are upheld.

Preparedness and prevention are other crucial elements for the success of the humanitarian response. For this purpose the Disaster Management Training Programme is central and, jointly managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, is important to national capacity-building so that vulnerable countries are prepared for emergencies and better able to mitigate their effects.

Closely related to the imperative of preparedness and ensuring an effective early response is the need for the more dynamic use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) at the early stages of emergencies. That would serve both to help contain crises and to contribute towards their solutions.

As for the consolidated-appeal process, it has been proved a success over the past 18 months. We therefore believe that this approach should continue and that the practice of putting the appeals together at the field level with inputs from all players concerned should be maintained. While such appeals are a key component in the overall strategy for meeting immediate humanitarian needs, we believe they should also be compatible with long-term rehabilitation and development requirements, as well as with the need to address the root causes of emergencies.

In conclusion, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has continued to strengthen and coordinate its response to the increasing number of emergencies and disasters and has striven to enhance the mechanisms for implementing resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. Obviously, however, natural disasters and complex emergencies have been increasing exponentially.

What is now crucial is that serious efforts be made to reverse the process, to prevent the further escalation and spread of such situations. All endeavours to this end should be collective, as diminishing resources are not commensurate with the task. At the same time, although more and more funding is required for short-term disaster alleviation and emergency relief, long-term objectives should be bolstered by such means as development and disaster prevention and preparedness, including national-capacity building, as the best guarantee of enduring stability. We therefore agree that we must have the courage to translate humanitarian ideals into tangible assistance for all those in desperate need. Such assistance is essential to the task of combating the enormous toll in terms of human lives and property, but, as a means of advancing development, it is also an essential component of the foundations of lasting peace and security.

Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The delegation of the Republic of Belarus is participating for the first time in the debate on this agenda item. We should like to underline the growing importance of the subject and the increasing involvement of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes in the consideration and solution of humanitarian problems, irrespective of the reasons for their having arisen.

This situation has prompted a very clear reaction. On one hand, events in the world demonstrate clearly that the General Assembly decision of two years ago concerning the need to expand the humanitarian activities of the United Nations and to strengthen coordination in this area was timely and important. On the other hand, we are concerned at the fact that the United Nations and its Member States have to give increasing priority to the matter of responding to humanitarian situations created not by natural disasters or abnormal phenomena - for example, technological catastrophes - but by crises caused by the uncivilized behaviour of certain States, civil wars, ethnic tension and violations of human rights.

We believe that the reasons for this disturbing trend should be analysed in a profound historical context that demonstrates the link with all the economic, military, political, social, cultural, natural and geographical factors. However, an analysis of these reasons is an exercise for another time. At this stage we must consider realistic measures that constitute an effective United Nations response to the consequences of the inability to prevent the emergence and development of complicated and other humanitarian situations.

The variety of reasons for and the scale of tragic events and emergency situations in the world necessitate further strengthening of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and enhancement of the role of the Under-Secretary-General, who is the person responsible for coordinating United Nations activities in the humanitarian sphere. We believe that it is important that there should be more coordination between the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the work of other Departments - in particular, the Department of Political Affairs, in respect of preventive diplomacy; and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, in respect of reaction to complex humanitarian situations.

Our delegation wishes to draw attention to some aspects of the strategy that has been worked out and implemented by the United Nations and its Secretariat, as

well as of operational humanitarian activities which, *inter alia*, were dealt with in the debate that took place at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council and which are being raised again in this debate. These issues are of concern to many Member States.

The first of them concerns problems of coordination between emergency humanitarian assistance at the very early stage and assistance at the rehabilitation and development stage. We feel that, even now, the number of need-assessment missions and the number of appeals for joint action and mobilization of resources are greater than the resources of the United Nations permit. Bearing in mind the proliferating and worsening crises in various parts of the world, as well as the limited resources of the Organization, the Secretariat, in keeping with the mandate given by the General Assembly, must concentrate its efforts primarily on complex emergency situations.

We agree in principle with those delegations that believe that decisions with financial implications for all Members arising from the provision of emergency assistance in situations where humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping activities have to be combined should not be taken without the participation of the General Assembly. Otherwise, those taking the decision should be the ones to pay.

Our delegation agrees entirely that it is necessary to enhance measures to protect the personnel involved - particularly, those people participating in complicated and dangerous emergency humanitarian operations. We also think that it is necessary that humanitarian assistance be provided in a manner fully consonant with the principles of humaneness, neutrality and other guiding principles that have been agreed to and are contained in the annex to resolution 46/182.

Governments and representatives of donor and recipient States must play a greater role in the formulation of specific policies, strategies and tactics, as well as programmes and projects for operational activities in the case of emergency situations. Here, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and, if need be, the Inter-Agency Working Group must be more open so that interested representatives of States and countries' Permanent Representatives at the United Nations in New York or in Geneva may be enabled to participate. We feel that there should be clearer procedures for the use of national experience and the personnel resources of Member States, including co-option of personnel to prepare policy documents and discuss questions of substance and other activities within these two inter-agency coordination mechanisms. Evaluation missions should also be more open so that donor States and non-governmental organizations might participate.

With regard to the location of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs - in particular, its transfer from New York to Geneva - we think that the solution of this rather technical problem should have no implications for the regular budget. Specifically, use should be made of technical devices such as the modern facilities for communication between Geneva and New York and for contact with other centres where regional multilateral organizations and other United Nations partners are located, and of the potential of the United Nations to make temporary use of communications facilities in the field.

The second aspect relates to the elaboration of a United Nations strategy for the mobilization of voluntary resources and for more task-specific use of the principle of comparative advantages, as well as movement away from emergency assistance to more independent development through the rehabilitation stage.

The rehabilitation stage is now the greyest area in this concept of ensuring the transition. We share the view that organizations, programmes and funds that provide development assistance, including the Bretton Woods agencies, could join forces here with those organizations that are responsible for providing emergency humanitarian assistance.

Here, in order to have a smoother, more consistent and faster transition from emergency assistance to long-term development we believe that it would be a good idea for the infrastructure and other rehabilitation projects, which are very effective at the rehabilitation stage, to be carried out and financed with the participation of these organizations, funds, programmes and agencies.

With regard to the role of the United Nations at the rehabilitation stages, that role we think should be limited to inter-agency coordination and providing working information to interested Governments and organizations. Once again I stress that taking into consideration the large number of appeals for concerted action in providing emergency humanitarian assistance, we must bear in mind the:

> "... serious resource problems that are affecting the ability of the United Nations system to deal effectively with many humanitarian emergencies." *(document E/1993/90, 21 June 1993, para. 33)*

We believe that special questions relating to machinery for reserve and emergency financing for humanitarian assistance should be discussed in depth and

comprehensively in the Fifth Committee before the Assembly takes a decision on them. Procedures for speedy disbursement and recruitment in emergency situations should be given urgent consideration as well as the financing of emergency assistance coordination groups, mechanisms for taking decisions to meet the costs of humanitarian assistance from peace-keeping operation resources, and the use of resources from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and other non-specific resources, as well as the desirability of setting up a mechanism for the collective covering of coordination expenses by the agencies.

Our delegation hopes that at the forty-eighth session some clarity will be introduced to these questions for meeting coordination expenditures and that the Fifth Committee will make recommendations regarding additional guidelines on these questions.

The third aspect deals with the differences in approach and the priorities given the dramatic proliferation of emergency situations. This is an important matter for discussion in the Second and Fifth Committees. Our delegation shares the view that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should react properly to any situation that has caused a humanitarian crisis.

The relevance of this can be demonstrated by looking at the special problems of Belarus where, unfortunately, we have an acute humanitarian situation. In addition to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, our traditional foreign economic relations have been disrupted and structural changes have been brought about in our shift from a centralized economy to a market economy, and we have had an unprecedented flood in my country. Our delegation thinks that there should be a thorough discussion in the main bodies of the United Nations of additional preventive measures and measures for reacting to complex humanitarian situations in newly independent States, not only in areas of ethnic tension or political instability.

In conclusion, I stress that preventing States from breaking up and social structures from disintegrating, preventing civil war, human rights violations, eliminating the reasons for poverty and poor economic development, depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation, minimizing the consequences of technological catastrophes, all these and other long-term priorities cannot fail to remain at the centre of United Nations activities in order to resolve humanitarian problems in our world.

Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe): I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report before us on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/48/536) prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. As natural disasters and other emergencies calling for international humanitarian assistance have increased dramatically since the adoption of these resolutions, it is indeed timely that we should take stock of the response of the United Nations system to these crises.

We from the southern African region take a particular interest in the question of humanitarian emergency assistance for a number of specific reasons. First, our region has until recently suffered years of destabilization and war which have resulted in massive dislocations of sections of the population and large refugee flows. Secondly, this already grave situation was exacerbated by the devastating drought which struck the entire region in 1991 and 1992, a calamity which exacted a heavy toll on the economic structures and social fabric of the people of the region. Thirdly, this natural disaster of unprecedented proportions came at a time when most of the countries in the region had just embarked on stabilization and structural adjustment programmes aimed, *inter alia*, at improving the standards of living of our people through improved economic performance.

There can be no doubt that the drought in southern Africa was a particularly daunting challenge not only to the people of the region but also to the international community as a whole. Good national and regional planning, including the transport and communications infrastructure and a sound early warning system, as well as a well-coordinated international response all played a crucial role in averting what could well have turned into a famine in the entire region. Indeed, to the first ever famine relief appeal issued jointly by the United Nations and a regional body, the United Nations-Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Appeal for the Drought Emergency in Southern Africa, launched in June last year, the international community responded most generously. We are also cognizant and appreciative of the effective country-level coordination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the cooperation among the operational agencies of the United Nations system in managing this crisis. We wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to the international community, the various bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their prompt and selfless response to an emergency situation unknown in living memory.

While we are most thankful for the quick response of the international community to the situation in our region, we remain concerned that a substantial portion of the pledges made in response to the joint appeal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and

the United Nations have not been converted into actual contributions. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, the total food and non-food requirements for the region as at 24 September 1993 amount to close to $951 million. There have been contributions of $724 million, leaving a substantial shortfall of close to $227 million. We would, in this connection, appeal to the donor community to honour its pledges in a timely manner, particularly bearing in mind the fact that the ravages of the drought are still with us and are being felt throughout the region.

In a similar vein, we wish to highlight a problem which characterized the southern African drought emergency operation, but which has also been pervasive in other regions: that of striking a correct balance between food and non-food requirements. The Secretary-General pointed out this problem in his report to the Assembly last year, and concerns have continued to be voiced in this regard ever since. Indeed, the report before us indicates that

> "the general pattern of under-funding of non-food aid requirements continues to pose serious problems for the coherent implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes". *(A/48/536, para. 52)*

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, also stressed this issue in his introductory statement on a related cluster of items before the Second Committee last Tuesday. We call on the donor community and the relevant international organizations to address this problem in a serious manner.

The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 46/182 was without doubt an important milestone in our quest to improve the response of the United Nations system and the wider international community to natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. That action by the Assembly demonstrated the desire of Member States for greater coherence and timeliness in the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies. My delegation is gratified to note that, under the new coordination arrangements mandated by resolution 46/182, the United Nations has considerably improved its capacity to formulate and coordinate its system-wide response to these emergencies.

Zimbabwe welcomes the lead role that the Department for Humanitarian Affairs has taken, in consultation with the Governments of the affected countries and the operational agencies concerned, in assessing the requirements in emergency situations with a view to developing an appropriate response by the international community. Indeed, it can only be on the basis of such in-depth assessments, involving all the concerned players, that realistic, consolidated inter-agency appeals can be launched. It is a source of great concern, however, that, as the report of the Secretary-General points out,

> "While the international community has been generous in its response, ... only 56 per cent of the requirements of the appeals launched to date have been met". *(A/48/536, para. 51)*

In this regard, we are heartened to note that the Department's Inter-Agency Standing Committee is reviewing the funding situation and looking into the various funding mechanisms with a view to improving resource-mobilization strategies for humanitarian assistance programmes.

On a related matter, it is encouraging to note that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund established in accordance with resolution 46/182 has been functioning in a satisfactory manner. Concerns, however, have been expressed over the constraints experienced in the utilization of the Fund, and a number of measures aimed at ensuring its most efficient functioning were recommended by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session last July.

Most important, it is our hope that the General Assembly will consider positively the proposal to increase the size of the Fund and, where appropriate, to expand its scope to include other international organizations. We have also noted with concern from the Secretary-General's report that field-coordination arrangements for emergency responses are under-funded. As we consider field-level coordination to be of fundamental importance, we would be in favour of the proposal for the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to support field-level coordination arrangements.

Zimbabwe attaches importance to the imperative need for a continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. We would fully agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that

> "By stressing this link between emergency operations and the development process, the Assembly has placed humanitarian assistance firmly in a developmental context". *(A/48/536, para. 108)*

In that regard, we wish to note with appreciation the continued collaboration between the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and the Southern African Development Community, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of Community member States in disaster prevention and preparedness. Seven special workshops under the Disaster Management Training Programme have

taken place for the drought-stricken countries of southern Africa. We have taken note of the additional financial requirements of that Programme, and would call on the donor community to respond positively to them.

Our appreciation also goes to other bodies of the United Nations system, notably the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, for the activities they are undertaking in our region in addressing the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. We also wish to thank the World Bank for the specific measures it is undertaking to lessen the adverse effects of the drought in the light of our structural-adjustment programmes.

Zimbabwe would wish to stress that for the requirements of the continuum from relief to rehabilitation to be fully met there is a need for adequate and predictable funding. We agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Appropriate and timely financing of the continuum from relief to development is cost-effective and would prevent the affected countries from sliding back into the vicious circle of dependency on relief assistance". *(A/48/536, para. 135)*

We therefore support his proposal that the donor community consider in a positive manner earmarking resources for rehabilitation and development, possibly through the creation of special funds.

I wish to conclude by referring to the heart-rending humanitarian emergency situations in Africa, which continue to call for urgent international attention. In our own part of the continent, we remain deeply concerned about the human tragedy that is unfolding in Angola. We once again call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Angola in order to make way for the provision of adequate humanitarian assistance and for a return of peace and normalcy to that unhappy country.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: Let me remind members that our meetings are scheduled to begin punctually at 10 in the morning and at 3 in the afternoon. But at those times the General Assembly Hall is usually deserted. The Assembly should not be seen to be ambiguous in its intentions, on the one hand calling for economy while on the other hand delaying its proceedings. Late starts, especially on a day like today when we have so many speakers, result either in overtime conference services or in the postponement of the debate, both of which involve financial costs.

I make an urgent appeal to the Assembly to show a greater respect for punctuality.

AGENDA ITEM 44 (*continued*)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

Mrs. FRÉCHETTE (Canada) *(interpretation from French)*: This has been a trying year for all those involved in this very difficult humanitarian emergency enterprise undertaken for entire populations who found themselves at the extreme point of life, death, despair and chaos. It has been trying also, and especially, for the tens of millions of victims of brutal conflicts and devastating catastrophes that result in displacement and starvation for many people: for them, emergency assistance constitutes the last defence and the only glimmer of hope for a new and better life.

In this context, to speak of an indispensable mission for the United Nations appears to be a commonplace, a colourless epithet, since we are dealing every day with glaring crises which appeal to the very conscience of the entire international community. It is not surprising that this problem of humanitarian assistance is located at the very heart of the primary vocation of the United Nations system, for which solidarity, dignity, respect for basic rights, development and peace have long been the point of convergence of its own aspirations with the ideals that form the foundations of civilization.

There is no need to insist on the cardinal importance of this mission. The figures speak for themselves: 108 catastrophes and natural disasters, 26 complex emergencies during the past year. Behind these modest words are hidden $62 billion in damages, a dramatic reduction in the prospects for development and, above all, the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives. I would like on behalf of the Government of Canada to express my full sympathy and my appreciation for those who, in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in the agencies, at Headquarters and in the field, have as their mission to try to provide relief and to prevent the worst. In this effort, they too are entitled to our encouragement and to our committed support. I would like to convey to Mr. Eliasson to what degree his zeal for the cause, his involvement and his conviction are sources of inspiration for us all.

For our part, we are trying to match our words with action, having agreed last year to budgets for the Department, as well as for the agencies and the other bodies dedicated to dealing with emergencies, of

$313 million for humanitarian assistance, of which $195 million is for food aid in the framework of 29 emergencies and of eight natural disasters.

The amount of energy and of attention devoted by the Member States to the issue of humanitarian aid is no doubt directly proportional to the exceptional importance accorded to it. The often critical comments directed at this new Department also can be understood as indications of the need to do more and better. However, these discussions have never called into question the essential obligation of coordination within the system and, consequently, have never called into question the central role of the Department. At best, we are dealing here only with questions of adjustments, of improvements, and methods.

While advocating these improvements, Canada nevertheless believes that the system has, more often than is said, lived up to its role. Everyone knows that crises that are avoided do not make headlines. The crisis in southern Africa represented a good example of inter-agency cooperation. Beyond the immediate reality, the true outlines of humanitarian action begin to take shape clearly in all its dimensions: that of prevention, that of humanitarian diplomacy, and, certainly, that of emergency aid of an immediately operational nature. It is precisely the dimension of prevention that permitted us to avoid a disastrous famine in southern Africa. This was achieved with the help of a little rain and of much cooperation and vision on the part of the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund in the field and of the Governments concerned. As far as humanitarian diplomacy is concerned, it was particularly evident in Angola, where perseverance on the issue of access finally made it possible to reach populations in dramatic situations of need. A dozen localities which had previously been cut off from all contact are now accessible. The same effort of negotiation has prevailed in the Sudan, permitting entire regions to benefit from initial aid there also. Finally, the operational dimension of the coordination undertaken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs no longer has to be emphasized, so evident is the need for it. Even Somalia, with the noteworthy exception of South Mogadishu, can claim, beyond the end of the famine, the prospects of a beginning of rehabilitation.

We fully recognize the progress that has been made and we wish to underline that progress. The evaluation of the performance and of the very existence of the Department since its establishment was, moreover, largely carried out last summer by the Economic and Social Council. On that occasion the Council, in fulfilment of its role of evaluating and orienting policies, reiterated the validity of resolution 46/182 as the basic framework of operation; recalled the importance of the guiding principles contained in the resolution, particularly those relating to impartiality, to neutrality and to humaneness; insisted that the Department should become the advocate of a humanitarian dimension which should be fully taken into account in each of the United Nations operations; expressed satisfaction with the array of instruments at the disposal of the Department, while at the same time suggesting a series of measures to improve its efficiency; and finally requested that humanitarian aid should be placed in a context of development in order to break the circle of dependence and to prevent its recurrence.

Canada is fully satisfied with these conclusions and believes that the resolution should draw on them closely and be built on that basis.

(spoke in English)

Central to the management of humanitarian emergencies is the imperative need for coordination and for clear leadership by the Coordinator of Emergencies in assuming this task. This culture of cooperation, whose cause we pleaded at the time of the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, at the Economic and Social Council and before the administrative bodies of the agencies, is slowly beginning to enter into the institutional habits of the system. The Department can bring real value added to the system by providing leadership and impetus and by offering an effective framework for implementation leading to rehabilitation and development. We believe that these functions are translated concretely, at the functional level, into the utilization of the instruments made available.

In the first place, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which must embody this culture of cooperation, should be oriented towards action and be responsible for the elaboration of policies on the issues facing it. Displaced populations, demining, demobilization, security of personnel, prevention and rehabilitation are at the very heart of all humanitarian action that claims to have vision and perspective. In this regard we expect that the Committee, under the guidance and the impetus of Mr. Eliasson, will be active and creative on these fronts.

The consolidated appeals should, as we have stated many times before, be closely based on the needs identified in the field. They should, in a global and realistic framework, identify clear priorities. They should be confined to complex emergencies and, finally, take into account the future needs of rehabilitation and of development. We believe that these appeals have already proven their usefulness for donor governments and for the

recipient countries, both of which benefit from a global and truly integrated approach.

As for the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, we are pleased to see that it is being used increasingly. More than $50 million has been utilized thus far, a clear sign of its usefulness. We continue to hope that simplified and clear rules will further facilitate its utilization. Canada is fully conscious of the fact that, as agencies become more familiar with this instrument, more demands will be placed on the Fund, as indicated by the report. Its extension to the International Organization for Migration would also translate into additional demands upon it. By definition, a revolving fund must be reimbursed. The solution to the problem of increased use lies in the shortening of the average seven-month period for reimbursing the Fund. The responsibility for reaching this goal is clearly shared among all the players. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs must exercise all necessary vigilance; agencies must quickly meet their obligation to reimburse the Fund; and donors must respond quickly to appeals. Canada is ready to shoulder its share of the responsibility and invites other contributing States to cooperate, in keeping with the objectives which led to the establishment of the Fund.

(spoke in French)

If the preceding considerations were truly understood and accepted by all those concerned, beginning with the agencies involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the basic conditions would be met for efficient and coordinated United Nations action in the humanitarian field. Certain substantive problems still remain to be solved. The budgetary problem continues to give us concern. We must make it clear that appropriate means should be approved to enable the Department to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to it.

We are encouraged by the evident signs of recognition by the Secretary-General himself of the high-priority nature of this issue. Once the debate in the Fifth Committee is over, it will be up to the Department to draw the lessons and impose on itself all the necessary strictness so that it can deal with present realities.

At a more immediate level, we feel called upon to respond to the problem of the need for capacity to react rapidly in the initial phase of an emergency, which is an undeniably critical time. The problem, we believe, is universally recognized, particularly in situations where the capacity for intervention in the field is insufficient or minimal.

Canada believes that it would be desirable and preferable for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to settle this question. That is its role, its vocation and its obligation. Precise deadlines would, however, appear to be necessary. The global review that the Economic and Social Council is to undertake in 1994 appears to constitute a natural point at which to make a more definitive judgement. More draconian solutions will have to be found at that point if the results are not acceptable.

In conclusion, Canada welcomes the outstanding spirit of dialogue that has prevailed between us on this so fundamental concern, humanitarian assistance. This augurs well, we believe, for the no less important discussions awaiting us on other issues relating to what amounts to a redefinition of the central mission of the United Nations system and to the ever-present need for a well-understood system of close coordination.

Ms. MARSHALL (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations - namely, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, the Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country Barbados - on agenda item 44, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

The countries of the Caribbean Community have taken careful note of the Secretary General's report (A/48/536) and the detailed and frank evaluation it has given of the progress made in carrying out the mandates of resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. We commend the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Eliasson, for its continued efforts to enhance system-wide cooperation and coordination of humanitarian assistance in response to the growing number of disasters and complex emergencies facing the international community.

We recognize the difficult and frequently dangerous circumstances under which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its operational partners work, and the increasing responsibilities they face. It is therefore imperative, in our view, that the Department be staffed and funded in a manner commensurate with the vital role it has been called upon to play on the international community's behalf.

The CARICOM member States note in particular the evolution and functioning of the mechanisms set up under resolution 46/182. With regard to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, we endorse the calls made by the Secretary-General and by the Economic and Social Council

for an early review of the Fund's financial regulations to allow for greater flexibility in its utilization, for a more rapid disbursement of funds in the early stages of an emergency, and for consideration to be given to increasing the size of the Fund and expanding its scope to include other international organizations.

We agree also that there is a need to strengthen the consolidated inter-agency appeals process, and that such appeals should constitute a key component of a comprehensive strategy that meets immediate humanitarian needs, is compatible with longer-term rehabilitation and development, and addresses root causes.

The CARICOM Governments also support the conclusion of the Economic and Social Council that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should be more action-oriented in carrying out its mandate as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and for formulating a coherent and timely United Nations response to major and complex emergencies.

We are heartened by the emphasis being placed by the Standing Committee on the continuum to rehabilitation and development, and look forward to receiving practical recommendations from the task force it has set up between the development organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to consider this important issue.

The CARICOM countries know from their own experience the vital need for humanitarian assistance policies to include comprehensive measures to ensure the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. In this context, we fully endorse the guidelines detailed in paragraph 133 of the report.

The Secretary-General's report has drawn attention to the dramatic increase in the number and scope of complex emergency situations, and has pointed to the fact that it is war and civil strife that now frequently generate the need for humanitarian assistance. The overwhelming size and diversity of these crises continue to strain the international community's capacity to respond and provide a constant challenge to the peacemaking and humanitarian arms of the Organization. They continue to be a source of deep concern to our region.

For the peaceful democracies of the Caribbean Community, the most immediate and compelling symbol of humanitarian suffering is the tragic situation of the people of Haiti, whose illegitimate rulers continue to flout the will of the international community. Some of our members, immediate neighbours of this unhappy country, have experienced first-hand the desperate exodus the situation has engendered. We note with regret that the response to date to the consolidated appeal for Haiti covers only 6.3 per cent of assessed needs.

The last two years have also seen a dramatic increase in the effects of natural disasters, which, according to estimates of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, inflicted damage totalling $44 billion in 1991 and $62 billion in 1992. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, droughts, floods, earthquakes, and cyclones are just as destructive for communities and settlements as wars and civil confrontation. They too merit a prompt and thorough response from the United Nations system.

We in the Caribbean are no strangers to the destructive powers of nature. In fact, in a recent survey by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, six CARICOM member States were ranked among the 25 most disaster-prone countries, 13 of which were small island developing States. Such natural disasters, primarily in the form of hurricanes but increasingly including storm surges and floods, are occurring with growing frequency and intensity in our region, with pervasive and long-term effects on our economies.

A single natural catastrophe can result in a fall in gross domestic product of as much as 30 per cent in a single year, and impact disproportionately on efforts at rehabilitation.

A recent phenomenon that has added to the burden on our countries has been the huge rise in insurance premiums on property and the withdrawal by large international insurance companies of reinsurance facilities for the islands of our subregion, now classified as high-risk entities. The economic consequences are so severe that the matter has received consideration by the Conference of the CARICOM Heads of Government, which has created an interdisciplinary working group to conduct an urgent review of the situation.

The extreme vulnerability of small island developing States, including the islands of the Caribbean, to the effects of natural disasters was recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Chapter 17 G of Agenda 21. As a consequence, the question of natural and environmental disasters is likely to be one of the priority areas in an eventual programme of action being prepared for consideration by the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in April next year.

In this regard, specific actions are being recommended at the national, regional and international levels to assist the disaster-prone small islands in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. It is anticipated that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator will play an important role in support of the programme once it is approved.

One of the programme's important objectives at the international level is to assist small island developing States in establishing national and regional institutional mechanisms and policies to reduce the impacts of natural disasters, improve disaster preparedness and integrate natural-disaster considerations in development planning, including through access to resources for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The draft programme also recommends that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction give special recognition to small island developing States so that their unique characteristics will be taken into account in developing natural disaster reduction management programmes.

Other actions under consideration by CARICOM States at the national and regional levels, in the context of the draft programme of action, include the establishment or strengthening of integrated disaster management agencies; the strengthening of early-warning systems and access to telecommunication links; the implementation of building codes, hazard mapping and risk analysis; the promotion of awareness and preparedness at the community level; the establishment of national disaster emergency funds; human resource development in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response; and the sharing of expertise and experiences among small island developing States.

It is the firm belief of CARICOM States that our demonstrated vulnerability to natural disasters necessitates a systematic upgrading of our own national and subregional capacity for disaster management in all its aspects. To this end, we have worked closely over the years with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its predecessor, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, particularly through the now-concluded Pan Caribbean Disaster Prevention Project. There remains, however, an urgent and ongoing need to strengthen national and regional institutional capabilities to respond adequately in times of crisis. In this regard, while we appreciate the continued support of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for our regional efforts, we believe that those efforts would be enhanced by a strengthened presence of the Department in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), established in 1991 by the Caribbean Community, is a tangible example of our subregion's determination to develop an indigenous capacity for disaster management and response. At the same time, we look forward to international support in those areas, such as search and rescue, where our capabilities remain inadequate. We are pleased to record that CDERA has developed four areas of concentration in its 1993-96 Work Programme, for which it is hoped there will be substantial inter-agency support. These include the consolidation of a regional disaster response mechanism; the enhancement of both the human resource capacity and local institutional arrangements for managing disasters; the updating of information and communications infrastructure; and the implementation of risk assessment and vulnerability mapping in the development of disaster mitigation and preventive strategies.

The CARICOM member States wish to recognize the contributions of a number of United Nations and regional operational agencies, as well as bilateral donors, in the development of a disaster management infrastructure in our subregion. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme, the Pan American Health Organization, Habitat, the World Meteorological Organization and the Organization of American States are making useful contributions in the areas of disaster management training, preparedness and response, as are the Canadian International Development Agency, the British Development Division, the Overseas Development Administration, the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Volunteers Technical Assistance. We look forward to a widening of support to encompass prevention and mitigation activities.

At present the CARICOM region is considering a comprehensive disaster emergency management programme, which, in addition to the traditional areas of preparedness and response, is seeking to broaden its scope to cover all aspects of disaster management and to link this to sustainable development. We would like to see an approach accommodated within the existing structures of humanitarian assistance, where, for every major disaster event, there is a facility through which a proportion of that assistance is allocated towards addressing a potential source of loss. We feel that only such substantive indicative commitments can propel the diverse interests in a commonly desired direction.

With regard to the review of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to take place next year, we urge that care be taken to ensure that the new technologies promoted in this context do not eliminate traditional disaster-resilient mechanisms, which exist in many

developing countries. A fusion of wisdoms must be the focus of our efforts.

The Caribbean region has had more than a decade of experience in promoting institutionalized disaster programmes. We believe that our experiences could be of interest and value to other countries in the developing world and, likewise, that we could learn valuable lessons from the experiences of others. In this regard, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be encouraged to facilitate programmes that promote the sharing of expertise and experience among disaster-prone countries in different regions of the world.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): It is a sad reality that the global need for humanitarian emergency assistance is more urgent today than it has ever been.

During 1993 the number of people affected by new and ongoing emergencies was more than 58.6 million. That figure includes 18 million people who faced the threat of starvation in southern Africa during 1992 and in early 1993.

The origins of the emergencies are often complex, but let us be clear about a central fact - it is war and civil strife that are leading to increasing calls for humanitarian assistance, calls which the Secretary-General acknowledges in his report as bringing

> "new challenges, and dangers, for the United Nations system in implementing its humanitarian role in conflict situations." *(A/48/536, para. 3)*

The fact that 58.6 million people were affected by emergencies during 1993 demonstrates the sheer enormity of the task we face. A staggering number of lives have been affected by the breakup of States, by the growth in regional and ethnic conflicts since the end of the cold-war era, and by the threat of famine of massive proportions.

In the two years since we adopted resolution 46/182 our capacity to deal promptly and effectively with large and complex emergencies has been severely stretched. The world has had to deal with no fewer than 26 major emergencies in addition to 108 natural disasters. As already noted, the causes of emergencies are often complex, and, consequently, the essential ingredients for a solution are often difficult to define. But if something is right, it must be attempted, even if it is difficult. And it is right that the United Nations should take up the challenge of today's humanitarian emergencies and do so with all of its intellect, spirit and drive - all that it can muster.

We may not be able to eliminate or wind down quickly enough the suffering involved, but if we can reduce it step by step we will have helped, and we will have done the least we should do.

There have been some successes. The prevention of a massive famine in 10 States of southern Africa during 1992 and in early 1993 ranks as a fine achievement which saved the lives of some 18 million people. That exercise was a tribute to the speed, skill and sheer hard work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and the major executing agency - the World Food Programme - and non-governmental organizations. It demonstrated that, when there is the political will to place humanitarianism first, much can be achieved. But the reverse is true: if political will is absent, the job of humanitarian relief becomes extremely difficult.

The report of the Secretary-General, in particular its conclusions and recommendations, demonstrates the magnitude of the humanitarian assistance challenge and its complexity. The conclusions of this year's high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council showed that the international community is resolved to meet this challenge and to strengthen relevant coordination mechanisms.

If we are to tackle the complex humanitarian emergencies we face today and know we will face in the future, we will need new techniques, new systems, new tools. In particular, we need to work together to find more effective ways to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance. Our first challenge is to face two very basic problems: the need to get our priorities right in placing the humanitarian objective first, and the need to be able to establish systems able to cope with humanitarian crises of the proportion and complexity we face today.

In Somalia, we recognized - possibly too late - the overwhelming need to ensure that sufficient supplies of food got through to the civilian population in the midst of the worst kind of civil breakdown. Yet in recognizing the need for force to underpin that humanitarian objective we began to lose our direction. Our objectives became so blurred as to call seriously into question the role of the United Nations. The humanitarian objective was almost compromised, and with it the most precious asset of the United Nations - its credibility.

The critical support given by military intervention in bringing the population of Somalia back from catastrophe is widely recognized. It is not possible in our time to contemplate an effective response to those humanitarian emergencies which are born of political and civil disorder

without recognizing the close, integral role of diplomacy, and even the use of force. There is a dynamic interrelationship between the humanitarian, political and military aspects of a complex emergency. But we need to learn from our experience in Somalia to ensure that the fundamental principles laid out in resolution 46/182 - the principles of humanity, of neutrality, of impartiality - are always maintained. The humanitarian objective must remain paramount.

Secondly, we need to find a much more effective way of meeting our humanitarian goals in large and complex emergencies than we have at present, and we need to do so with a heightened sense of urgency. Our capacity to respond quickly and effectively has enormous implications for human life, not just in the short term but for the very prevention of conflict and for the prompt alleviation of tensions. There is a need to realize that unsolved humanitarian problems affect political stability and potentially manifest themselves later as far worse humanitarian problems. Preventive diplomacy has a key role to play in humanitarian affairs. It is also time for us to recognize that the responsibility for effective humanitarian responses involves a four-way partnership between the United Nations, the donors, the non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, the recipient country. Unless each one of these collaborates effectively, the prospects for an effective response are sharply reduced.

Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, in his address to the General Assembly on 27 September, in which he presented his study *Cooperating for Peace*, proposed a new approach to meeting the humanitarian assistance challenge. Senator Evans noted that, despite recent efforts to strengthen humanitarian relief coordination, there are widely acknowledged inadequacies in the present United Nations international system and that structural reasons lie at the heart of those problems. In the first place, the post-Second-World-War United Nations relief system evolved from a structure created for different purposes. Apart from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), all the main agencies now involved in emergencies acquired their role as a secondary function, the main role being seen as the promotion of economic and social development. Notwithstanding the dramatic upsurge in their humanitarian relief work in the 1980s, the organization of the agencies underwent no fundamental change.

It is not clear that either the recently established Department of Humanitarian Affairs or the Inter-Agency Standing Committee is going to be capable of resolving the coordination problems that flow from this multiple-agency, multiple-function structure. Given that the problem is largely structural in origin, it seems to cry out for a structural solution. A number of models have been suggested, but our own preference is for the creation of a single United Nations disaster-response agency under the aegis of the Secretary-General, working to a new deputy secretary-general for humanitarian affairs. This would be an operational body, taking over the relief and related basic rehabilitation work of the current major players - the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (WFP). To the extent that the skills of other agencies were required, they would be provided under contract or on a fee-for-service basis. The necessary skills could also be purchased elsewhere from non-governmental organizations and from national Governments. All this would leave UNICEF and WFP continuing with their development work, and UNHCR concentrating on its protection work. While this model does involve major change - and such change in the United Nations system is, of course, always somewhat controversial - we believe it should be, it must be, seriously considered.

Senator Evans also proposed in *Cooperating for Peace* elevating the coordination of humanitarian affairs within the United Nations Secretariat to Deputy-Secretary-General level. A person appointed at that level would be able to maximize the United Nations capacity to direct, to rationalize and to coordinate humanitarian responses and thus avoid the often unproductive competition that has occurred both within the United Nations system and outside it on coordination issues. It would also reflect the high importance attached to coordination in this area of the United Nations activities.

Our objective is to achieve a much better response to emergencies than we have at present and we are willing to consider all possible options that might lead to this outcome - the outcome we need. But, meanwhile, time will not stand still. We cannot afford to leave the present arrangements as they are. We must be willing to engage actively in looking for improvements in the status quo, even if we think this is a second-best approach.

In that spirit, let me comment briefly on a few specific proposals referred to in the Secretary-General's report. First, we agree with extending coverage of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to include the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Secondly, we think that ways of speeding up the reimbursement of the CERF should be examined in preference to seeking a large increase in its size. Its

revolving nature should enable the Fund to extend its reach, if the slow pace of reimbursement can be improved.

Thirdly, we remain unconvinced, on the evidence presented so far, that the answer to improved coordination is to establish additional funding for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance initial coordination in complex emergencies. However, we remain interested in seeing a full and detailed proposal on what is entailed. But in the absence of a draft proposal, our best judgement at present is that this amount of field-level coordination risks making the Department operational in large and complex emergencies, a course which my Government does not favour.

We commend the dedication of Under-Secretary-General Eliasson, of his staff and of the United Nations agencies and other relevant international bodies for their sterling work in responding to the humanitarian assistance challenge. We recognize the improvements which have been made in the workings of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its Working Group. We believe the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is doing an important job, and doing it well, in so far as it can, and we feel strongly that the Department should be properly equipped to manage better its affairs between New York and Geneva. But we believe that in time the structure of the present arrangements will be shown to be clearly insufficient. We believe, therefore, that entirely new arrangements will need to be established.

We also congratulate Mrs. Ogata on her re-election as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We strongly support the comprehensive approach the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has taken towards the crises in the former Yugoslavia and Cambodia. But, as we have already said, no single agency is yet capable of dealing by itself with the full spectrum of global disaster-response, humanitarian and refugee crises involving massive displacements of people.

The world demands a more effective and timely response to the natural and man-made tragedies which afflict vast numbers of our peoples. We must close the gaps and eliminate the overlaps in mandates which make for duplication in some responses and failure to act in others. Clearer, focused lines of authority are needed. As an interim measure, we remain committed to working with others to try to improve the existing arrangements. But we believe an effective answer will elude us until we take the radical course and resolve the mismatch between current circumstances and past structures.

Above all, we need to demonstrate with renewed conviction that the humanitarian objective is so fundamentally important that we will not compromise on it.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): In preparation for our consideration of agenda item 44, Under-Secretary-General Eliasson recently briefed representatives of Member States on the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs during the past two years. He concluded - and I agree with him - that resolution 46/182 has been reasonably effective and that the international community has clearly benefited from it. For example, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has noted, except for the southern part of Mogadishu, most of Somalia has now become secure, and its people have been fed fairly well through humanitarian relief activities. Also cited as examples of successful humanitarian efforts of the United Nations are the early response to the drought in southern Africa and the operation in Mozambique.

Regrettably, the mass media generally do not focus on these success stories, and so they are apt to be soon forgotten. Whereas the United Nations once suffered what was called a crisis of public indifference, now, with the end of the cold war, it is said to be confronted with a crisis of excessive expectations, and, as a result, it has become more vulnerable to criticism. All in all, however, I firmly believe that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has established a solid foundation in the United Nations system to meet the challenges ahead.

With resolution 46/182, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was given the difficult mandate of strengthening coordination among all United Nations humanitarian assistance activities. The lack of an effective organization and sufficient resources makes this a particularly difficult task. My Government is pleased to note, therefore, that the budget proposal prepared for the biennium 1994-95 gives priority to the field of humanitarian activities, together with peace-keeping operations and human rights. It reaffirms its resolve to cooperate with other interested Member States for the realization of this budget plan.

On this occasion I should like to announce that the Government of Japan has decided to promote, together with the United States Government, efforts to help strengthen the Department's communication network capacity, which is so urgently needed.

At the coordination segment of the meetings of the Economic and Social Council last summer, my delegation underlined the need for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to act as a catalyst or facilitator among the

operational agencies and thereby generate added value for the United Nations humanitarian activities now under way. I identified five areas of endeavour where the Department might do so in the process of coordinating humanitarian assistance. They are, first, a clear identification of what constitutes a complex emergency and a redefinition of the Department's role in ensuring a prompt and effective response to complex emergencies; second, the conduct of humanitarian diplomacy; third, the function of humanitarian advocacy in combined United Nations operations involving peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance; fourth, the launching of consolidated appeals; and, fifth, the orchestrating of humanitarian efforts covering the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. It is gratifying to learn from the Secretary-General's report (A/48/536) that the Department has undertaken wide-ranging efforts towards this end and that it has in fact made progress in several areas.

I should like to take this opportunity to comment on a number of issues which pose new challenges for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

One task given to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs which was not envisaged in resolution 46/182 is the coordination of its activities with those of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs in responding to complex emergencies. My Government notes with satisfaction that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been serving as the humanitarian spokesman on behalf of the other operational organizations, in compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, as laid down in the resolution. It is also encouraging to note that valuable experience has been gained regarding relations between humanitarian and military operations in field-level operations, and that further improvements will be introduced to ensure coordination and the effective division of work.

Moreover, I agree with the view conveyed in the Secretary-General's report that:

> "Basic relief assistance can help to defuse political tension, thereby contributing to the promotion of a peaceful solution to a conflict." (*A/48/536, para. 143*)

Our experience has borne out this relationship. In this connection, my Government welcomes the forthcoming meeting on the coordination of aid for Somalia, at which members of the various Somali clans will participate in the discussion of future relief and rehabilitation programmes. We anticipate that this effort will facilitate progress towards a political solution of the situation in Somalia.

Although I have noted the political usefulness of humanitarian assistance, we must recognize that such assistance in and of itself can neither provide nor substitute for a political solution to conflicts. We must therefore concentrate our efforts on removing the root causes of conflicts, irrespective of whether humanitarian assistance efforts are under way. Moreover, humanitarian operations should not be burdened with unreasonable expectations when a political breakthrough is deemed remote or virtually impossible.

When the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182 two years ago, few could have anticipated the number, magnitude and complexity of the humanitarian crises now facing the United Nations. To meet increasing demands for humanitarian relief across the world, the United Nations has launched numerous consolidated appeals for contributions, totalling $4.6 billion. According to the Secretary-General's report, however, only 56 per cent of that goal has been met to date. This shortfall could undermine the credibility of the United Nations system, which is a matter of great concern to members of the international community. From a donor's viewpoint, I must say that to a certain extent, at least, the difficulty may derive from the fact that some of those appeals are poorly formulated in terms of needs assessment and prioritization, and also from the lack of adequate follow-up. I am therefore gratified that the Secretary-General's report acknowledges that there is room for improvement in permitting a more focused donor response and assures us that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will undertake follow-up activities to achieve this end.

From a wider perspective, however, I believe there may have to be a new strategy and a new conception to ensure the availability of resources to allow for a more rapid and effective response to emergencies. This conviction is strengthened whenever a United Nations resolution is passed calling for a tripartite United Nations operation combining peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian activities to respond to a complex emergency. Even though these three operations go hand in hand in addressing a combination of objectives - maintaining order, assisting in national reconciliation and contributing to economic rehabilitation - the disparity that exists with regard to financial arrangements remains a matter of concern. While peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts have resource bases on which to rely, humanitarian operations are obliged to secure funding on a case-by-case basis.

My Government is gratified to note that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is reviewing the funding situation and is studying different funding

mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies for humanitarian assistance programmes. We are eager to hear the outcome of its deliberations on this urgent issue.

In this connection, my Government would like to underscore the importance of pursuing preventive diplomacy, which is one of the central themes of "An Agenda for Peace". It is also looking forward to the forthcoming agenda for development, which will address the root causes from the socio-economic angle, in an effort to reverse the trend of ever-increasing burdens on the international community.

My Government is pleased that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has come into force and is serving as an effective tool for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. My Government is well aware of the suggestion that there be more flexible utilization of the Fund, particularly to expedite responses in the field. It is generally sympathetic to this idea, and calls on the IASC to study it, while taking into account the revolving nature of the Fund and the need for accountability. As regards the issue of increasing the size of the Fund, my Government considers that before a decision to this effect is reached a review should be made of those financial arrangements and reserve funds which are already available for emergencies in related humanitarian operational agencies, and that complementarity between these arrangements and the Fund should be established.

Japan fully recognizes the need for rapid response in the field. Indeed, this is one of the areas where the coordination capacity of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should immediately be strengthened in order to help initiate relief operations, especially where there is no humanitarian infrastructure. This will require the dispatch of fact-finding missions, the assessment of needs and the preparation of consolidated appeals at the very onset of emergencies. Financial arrangements must therefore be urgently addressed. Several constructive ideas have been proposed. For example, it has been suggested that interest accrued by the Fund be used in such a manner as to preserve the revolving nature of the Fund, that the start-up costs of an operation be included in consolidated appeals and that a special reserve fund be established for such start-up operations. My Government attaches particular importance to ensuring funding for prompt start-up operations in the field and hopes that the IASC will undertake further deliberations on this issue as well.

In closing, let me reaffirm my Government's support for the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in enhancing coordination of humanitarian assistance in the United Nations system. My Government will continue to extend its full cooperation to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as it discharges its important responsibilities.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique): It is a great honour and privilege for me to participate on behalf of my delegation in the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/536) on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

My delegation would like to place on record its deep appreciation of the Secretary-General's report for the lucid manner in which it illustrates the various activities carried out by the Organization in its quest to meet the ever-increasing demands for humanitarian assistance in various parts of the world.

In our endeavours to face the challenges of humanitarian assistance and deal with emergency situations the role of the United Nations is of the utmost importance in providing a proper framework for effective coordination when the international community is called upon to address difficult problems emerging from natural disasters or other phenomena of a complex nature.

The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 was a wise and timely initiative, given the increasing number of emergency situations world wide that call for humanitarian assistance.

In this connection I wish once again to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose recent visit to Mozambique contributed greatly to generating a new momentum for rapid implementation of the peace process upon which rests the smooth implementation of the whole programme of rehabilitation of and humanitarian assistance to Mozambique.

As I speak here today I wish to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and to his staff for their untiring dedication to the day-to-day problems affecting millions of people in the world. Indeed, since assuming his duties as Head of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs Ambassador Eliasson has shown a great sense of leadership in dealing with sensitive issues affecting human beings in times of despair and distress. We in Mozambique are happy to note that the efforts of peacemaking and peace-building undertaken through the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) can go hand in hand with

humanitarian assistance programmes and developmental issues.

We in southern Africa, including Mozambique, attach great importance to the agenda item under consideration. As the Assembly will recall, until very recently the southern African region was suffering from the consequences of a severe drought, the worst of its kind in living memory. For that reason a consolidated appeal was launched by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to address the appalling situation facing the peoples of the region.

The consequences of the drought were particularly harsh in Mozambique, where the plight created by the prolonged drought had been exacerbated by a protracted war, resulting in dramatic human suffering that only began to come to an end last year with the signing in Rome of the General Peace Agreement. Therefore, we have been faced with a very complex burden that requires massive international attention to all its multifaceted dimensions.

At present, although we have been blessed with some modest rain since the last quarter of 1992, the whole picture of the humanitarian and emergency situation in Mozambique remains critical, as is well documented in the Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Programme for 1993 and 1994. It is worth mentioning, however, that with the end of the war and prospects for peace in the country a Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Programme prepared by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in coordination with the Government, is under way. The Programme encompasses a broad range of immediate actions, including support for the repatriation process, the demobilization of armed units, emergency relief, the restoration of essential services, and balance-of-payment and budget support. Failure to address one of those components will naturally have a negative impact on the whole process, which aims at establishing a healthy environment for our people as we embark on the difficult task of rebuilding a nation torn by war and natural disasters for so many years.

As has been recognized time and again, the magnitude of the country's current needs goes far beyond our powers and ability to respond with the required resources, both human and material. However, my Government is deploying its best efforts to meet any requirements within its reach and is cooperating fully with the United Nations system and the international community as a whole in all aspects of tackling the problems of major concern.

The Donors' Conference on Mozambique held at Rome on 15 and 16 December 1992, under the auspices of the Government of Italy, and the Follow-up Meeting held at Maputo on 8 and 9 June of this year have allowed the participants to chart the programmes to be undertaken and to assess the resources needed for a successful humanitarian operation in Mozambique.

An updated assessment of the requirements for humanitarian assistance to Mozambique shows that the country needs some $609.7 million to meet its priority needs, of which $559.4 million have been committed by donors. We express our profound gratitude to the donor community for its continued assistance to our people, and we trust that the international community will continue to spare no efforts to address effectively the emergency situation in Mozambique, particularly with regard to securing the $50 million shortfall that remains.

We are pleased and encouraged to note that the Government, the United Nations system and the international community in general are in accord in outlining the course of action required to tackle the problem of emergency and humanitarian assistance to Mozambique.

The prospects of peace make a priority of concentration on reconciliation and on the return to normal life of the millions of returnees and displaced persons throughout the country. By and large, the successful reintegration of returnees and displaced persons will create conditions conducive to the involvement of every Mozambican citizen in the development programmes that are under way in the country. This framework will also contribute to acceleration of the Government's programme for economic and social recovery.

We also note with satisfaction that the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, as one of its innovative measures, attaches great importance to the continuum efforts by integrating humanitarian programmes into long-term rehabilitation and development strategies and that the existing inter-agency consultation mechanisms at the country level are being applied successfully in Mozambique.

I should like, on behalf of my Government, to take this opportunity to reiterate our pleasure at and our appreciation of the remarkable work that has been done by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC) to help the Government to address vital issues pertaining to the humanitarian relief programmes in our country.

As of now, about 30 per cent of Mozambique's 2 million refugees have come home under a wide programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees, in close collaboration with UNOHAC and other international organizations. About 1.5 million internally displaced persons have been resettled in the country, in the areas of their origin or of their choice, and it is expected that about 2 million people will be resettled within the next 12 months.

Other major concerns, in the overall process of emergency rehabilitation in the country, are the safety of United Nations and other international personnel, the demining process and the question of free access to remote areas.

With regard to mine clearance, which is essential to the resettlement of returnees and displaced persons, the Government is cooperating fully in the Mozambique mine-clearance programme, which was undertaken on the initiative of the United Nations. This is a comprehensive programme, which includes the clearance of priority roads, the development of a mine-clearance capability and the implementation of a mine-awareness programme. Its success is crucial to the current efforts to rehabilitate the rural infrastructure and to promote agricultural production. It was in this context that my Government supported and sponsored the resolution concerning assistance in mine clearance that was adopted recently by the Assembly.

In our view, the decision of the United Nations, by General Assembly resolution 44/236 of December 1989, to launch the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction represented the first step on the path of promoting concerted international action to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. Most developing countries want to see the substantive part of resolution 44/236 implemented before the end of this decade. The report that we are considering today sums up the objective of that part in these words:

> "It represents an international effort to promote awareness of the importance of disaster reduction, to support the strengthening of the capacities of vulnerable countries, to facilitate technology transfer and information exchange, and to promote research and training." *(A/48/536, para. 27)*

At this juncture we are particularly pleased at the steps that have been taken to convene a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held next year at Yokohama, Japan. We have high hopes of a successful outcome to this Conference as it will provide an opportunity for a mid-term review of activities related to the International Decade and will establish a programme and determine concrete action to be undertaken in the years to come.

But any programme for the reduction of natural disasters, if it is to be successful, will certainly have to include a package of mitigation and preventive measures rooted in programmes of sustained economic and social development encompassing a long-term strategy to promote national capacity-building, which will be an essential element of an effective response to future disasters and emergency situations.

We are of the view that the Secretary-General's 1994 report on the corresponding agenda item should, in so far as is possible, make an assessment of the experience of the United Nations in addressing the issue of the coordination of various humanitarian and emergency situations throughout the world. We believe that the lessons learned from these operations can be of paramount importance in the promotion of future preparedness in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. At the same time, we believe that, given the unpredictable nature of the natural and similar disasters that have stricken nations and regions from time to time, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be given much greater flexibility in utilization of the Revolving Fund. We believe that this would enhance the Department's capacity to react effectively and promptly to future emergency situations.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: The delegation of Tunisia would like, first, to thank the Secretary-General for the high quality of the documentation on agenda item 44.

The concerns expressed in the Secretary-General's report about the devastating effects of natural disasters and other emergency situations, as well as the loss of life that they cause and their negative impact on economic and social development, are all shared by my country.

As document A/48/536 points out, the number, magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and emergency situations requiring a coordinated response from the international community have been on the increase in recent years.

No region today is totally immune to natural disasters or man-made devastation. But, as the report states, too often these disasters have effects that are longer lasting since the people affected are more economically and socially vulnerable. Hence in recent decades the proliferation of disasters in disadvantaged and ecologically fragile areas has compounded the sometimes unavoidable degradation of the environment.

Poverty, demographic pressures and settlement in areas of risk are all factors that have compounded, and in

many cases have caused, ecological damage, destruction and imbalances between man and his natural environment.

I believe we need not emphasize the complexity of the natural disasters and other emergency situations of which our peoples and countries have been victims and which they have had to confront with very limited human and material resources. Hence the importance of a rapid response and the need for careful coordination in the field to limit damage, mitigate the consequences of disasters, and enable the people to resume as normal a life as possible and take control of the situation. At the same time, prompt coordination in the field makes it possible for the local and national authorities quickly and effectively to meet the needs and expectations of the victims of emergency situations.

In this enormous task the contribution made by the United Nations system, side by side with governmental authorities, is of capital importance. Clearly, our States have all, in one way or another, established structures to deal with the priorities in difficult situations. But in these complex situations the expertise, the experience and the technical know-how of the United Nations system are indispensable, given the magnitude of the disasters and the needs that arise from them and which are beyond the capabilities of these States.

In the field, experience in recent years has shown that effectiveness in responding to disasters and emergency situations depends on coordination and centralization that harmonizes efforts and avoids waste of resources and ad hoc or amateurish approaches. The coordination we have in mind should come about within the United Nations system, between the operational organizations and the specialized agencies under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in close cooperation with the Government of the affected country.

Our action should also include disaster prevention and should strengthen the system established by the United Nations. Necessary steps should be taken to prevent man-made disasters, particularly those occurring as a result of armed conflicts or nuclear or chemical activities. Past experience should enable us to draw the proper conclusions in order to avoid such disasters in future.

Furthermore, we continue to take part in all activities relating to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and we hope that the international community will in this context draw on everyone's experience to adopt a better preventive approach.

The determination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs "to meet existing and future challenges" (A/48/536, para. 15) is welcomed by my country. We express our support for the work of the Department and renew our appeal for the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to be given the necessary resources to consolidate its work, increase its effectiveness and enable it to respond speedily and effectively to disasters and other emergency situations.

That is why we appeal to the international community to bear in mind the long-term recovery and development needs of the affected country in order to strengthen national capacities and to mitigate the effects of disasters and prevent their recurrence. In this connection, I wish to quote from the Secretary-General's report:

> "Some disasters may be prevented, and the impact and adverse effects of others can be reduced." *(A/48/536, para. 20)*

My country fully shares that assessment.

We also wish to support the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report regarding mitigation of the effects of future disasters. We think, therefore, that mitigation measures should be built into development programmes and be an integral part of the continuum from disaster to rehabilitation.

Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic):* Colombia has already spoken on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and, therefore, also on our behalf, so I should merely like to add the following.

My delegation has studied with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/48/536). We wish to commend the report as it deals with all aspects of the problem. We agree with the Secretary-General's view that there is an increasing demand on humanitarian assistance and a paucity of resources.

Experience has shown that the provision of humanitarian assistance is a complex activity that requires a great deal of clarity, transparency and understanding at all levels. Accordingly, my delegation wishes to make the following comments:

First, past experience has shown that there is a paucity of resources despite the increasing number of requests. Hence the need to make savings in the disposable resources, by depending on the local capacity of the affected countries. This requires providing the national institutions responsible for humanitarian emergency assistance and disaster mitigation with equipment and competent local cadres. This should be coupled with the

rehabilitation of the means of transport and the organization of special units to carry out research and provide training in such areas as disaster mitigation and early warning.

In our view, the approach of depending on such institutions is the most appropriate one as the said institutions are the most viable. At the same time, local non-governmental organizations should be rehabilitated, as they are more in touch with the local environment in their own countries and have the advantage of speaking the language of the recipients of assistance. Here we should like to point out that expertise and knowledge can be acquired through experience.

Secondly, all parties concerned must respect the need for humanitarian assistance to be provided independently from political considerations: it must not be linked to or confused with such considerations in any way. Only independence and efficiency can ensure substantial, effective provision of humanitarian assistance and the continued viability of assistance programmes.

Thirdly, in its resolution 46/182, the General Assembly emphasized that the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development was one of the fundamental principles of multilateral assistance. At its 1993 summer session, the Economic and Social Council too called upon relief programmes, consolidated appeals and non-governmental organizations to take into account the needs of the affected countries with respect to long-term rehabilitation and development at an early stage of emergency assistance. The Economic and Social Council also called for the strengthening of national capabilities to mitigate the effects of future problems. The Council also recommended that bodies with a development mandate and involved in relief activities should strengthen their capacities and prepare rehabilitation programmes to build the necessary infrastructures, thus helping the countries and agencies involved in dealing with the financial side of the issue.

However, the response to the needs of development and reconstruction programmes remains rudimentary in many parts of the world while reconstruction and development must go hand in hand with emergency assistance so that emergency situations may not recur and national capabilities may be strengthened.

Fourthly, mines left in areas of past conflicts threaten civilian lives and hamper emergency assistance, reconstruction and the return of displaced populations. Demining requires vast resources and we request that the necessary resources be made available for that purpose. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should make demining a priority activity. In this respect, Sudan sponsored the draft resolution on demining which was adopted by the General Assembly earlier this session.

Fifthly, the optimum use of disposable resources must be made a priority. This could be achieved through expending those resources on the emergency assistance and reconstruction programmes they are allocated to while reducing administrative costs by depending on local staff. In the same vein, Governments, United Nations offices and non-governmental organizations on the ground should undertake the tasks of assessment missions mandated by the United Nations. This would reduce expenditures and permit proper assessments to be carried out.

Sixthly, the recently established Central Emergency Revolving Fund is a new way for the United Nations to take swift action in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. In our view, increased resources should be made available to the Fund in the light of the increased number of disasters and greater number of requests for United Nations assistance. We agree that the United Nations Migration Fund too should be included in this connection. It should be possible to use the Revolving Fund with greater flexibility, to enable the coordinating committee and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to send out assessment teams in the initial stages of a disaster.

Finally, we agree on this matter with the Secretary-General's view that:

> "Lessons drawn from the recent implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes have indicated the need to design programmes and strategies for the continuum which take into account the specific circumstances of each country, including socio-economic, political, historic and cultural considerations. In addition, the following guidelines should be noted:
>
> "(a) Relief assistance should not lead to long-term dependency on external aid;
>
> "(b) It is essential that international entities involved in the continuum work in close cooperation with the national authorities at all levels;
>
> "(c) Rehabilitation and reconstruction criteria should be integrated into the emergency response at the earliest possible stage;
>
> "(d) ... programmes ... should provide for the strengthening of early warning systems and of national capacity to respond to disasters;

"(e) Assistance programmes should be designed ... [so as to] provide the bridge from relief to reconstruction and development;

"(f) Specific resources should be earmarked for rehabilitation and reconstruction". *(A/48/536, para. 133)*

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: I wish to begin by associating my delegation with the statement made this morning by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

Permit me next to pay a tribute to Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for the high quality of the report before the Assembly on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. We also convey our admiration for his selfless commitment in the fulfilment of his noble task - thanks to which countless members of the human race identify the United Nations with their very survival.

The Organization has indeed done a great deal to provide rapid assistance to millions of disaster victims world wide. But much remains to be done so that the international community's emergency humanitarian assistance can be provided in an effective way commensurate with the dimensions of the needs.

Two years ago the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, which set out the guiding principles and the machinery for the United Nations system to carry out humanitarian activities. That resolution also established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to take charge of this important aspect of United Nations activities while ensuring respect for the principles of humanitarianism, neutrality and impartiality.

Since its creation, the Department has faced 108 sudden-onset natural disasters and 26 complex emergencies. On the basis of that experience, the Secretary-General's report (A/48/536) reviews activities and events since the adoption of resolution 46/182, and sketches new measures for strengthening humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

The report shows that only 56 per cent of the needs described in appeals have been met to date, which alerts Member States to take action so as to make those needs a joint concern of the international community and so as to make increased efforts to meet them.

It is reassuring that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund became operational as of May 1992. Payments of over $52 million made to date are indeed encouraging. The Fund, which is a valuable tool for sending out humanitarian assistance in the first critical days after a disaster has occurred, should be constantly replenished and its functions should be taken over by donors, whose own efforts will continue and consolidate efforts by the United Nations.

In this spirit, an increase in the financial target for the Fund should strengthen the United Nations capacity to take prompt action and should even help reduce subsequent demands for resources in the event that initial intervention in a given catastrophe is inadequate. Increased flexibility in the rules governing the Fund would also further the aim of speedy and effective intervention.

Algeria, having contributed $10,000 to the Fund in 1994, hopes that the Fund will become progressively efficient and that it will garner support from an ever-increasing number of sources.

There is a clear link between emergency situations, rehabilitation and development. For a smooth transition from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance must be provided in such a way as to enable long-term reconstruction and development to take place, and emergency measures must be seen as one step along the road towards such long-term development; this is a point made in paragraph 40 of the annex to resolution 46/182 (1991).

Moreover, as the Secretary-General stresses in his report, it is clear that

"relief operations [should not] create a dependency syndrome among recipients". *(A/48/536, para. 139)*

Humanitarian assistance must therefore be accompanied by a renewed commitment to contribute to economic growth and development, so that, through attention to the causes of many natural disasters stemming from economic problems that face developing countries, these countries are provided with the means to take responsibility for many of their possible needs in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize the importance of the role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a centre for collecting, analysing and disseminating available information as part of the early warning system for natural disasters and emergency situations. We welcome the initial work undertaken by the Department to establish an international information system on emergency situations, and my delegation would encourage the Department to speed up work on the other

phases and to strengthen the system, because we are convinced that such a successful system will be increasingly supported by all Member States.

Mr. BHANDARE (India): My delegation wishes to compliment the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report to the General Assembly. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. It is useful to recall that the Charter of the United Nations itself states that one of the purposes of the Organization is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. India, as a founding Member of the United Nations, has consistently attached high priority to this aspect of the work of the Organization.

As members are aware, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was established pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 46/182 and further strengthened by resolution 47/168. The Department has already surmounted several hurdles and passed a number of landmarks in the development of its fledgling assistance efforts. Having been set up primarily for the effective coordination and strengthening of the humanitarian emergency assistance programmes of the United Nations, it has already played an admirable role. The manner in which it has risen to the various appeals for assistance has been creditable indeed. In the past 18 months, in particular, the Department has coped extremely competently with the high expectations of the international community.

The guidelines for such humanitarian assistance, as laid out in resolution 46/182, have been further fine-tuned by the need for coordination among the various agencies that are faced with the onerous responsibility of carrying out humanitarian relief. These include organizations of the United Nations system such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. The responsibility in the field for humanitarian work is frequently entrusted by the Department to the UNDP Resident Coordinator. My delegation recognizes the great value that must be attached to coordination among all these agencies and is committed to support all activities of the United Nations in furtherance of such coordination attempts as are within the scope of the General Assembly resolutions.

My delegation also attaches great importance to the parameters of such humanitarian assistance which have been spelled out in several General Assembly resolutions, in particular 46/182. These parameters have included the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality; full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States; the primary importance of the consent of the affected countries and of their appeal; and, finally, the primary role that must be given to the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. My delegation reaffirms its committed support for all humanitarian activities under the United Nations umbrella and within these specified parameters.

My delegation has been especially pleased at the responses that have been coordinated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), owing to which complex emergencies in Somalia, Angola, the Sudan and newly independent States have been so satisfactorily tackled. As we are aware, the role of the IASC received high praise at the meetings of the Economic and Social Council in July 1993. My delegation also attaches great importance to the role of the IASC and its added focus on disaster mitigation and natural-disaster prevention and preparedness. We are also appreciative of the efforts made by all agencies concerned in giving an impetus to the programmes of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction mandated in December 1989 by the General Assembly in resolution 44/236.

My delegation especially extends full support to enhanced United Nations activity in increasing capacities at the country level, the better to deal with natural disaster and sudden-onset emergencies. We urge that the provision of technological assistance that has been committed at appropriate levels in the United Nations system to assist countries in these fields be undertaken without any delay.

I should like to place on record India's appreciation for the prompt action taken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to bring relief to the victims of the recent tragic earthquake that hit the state of Maharashtra in September 1993. The Department was quick to dispatch three members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Stand-by Team to the area. It also made an emergency grant of $50,000. Subsequently, the Department monitored the situation round the clock with a view to mobilizing resources and distributing accurate information to the international community and the media.

This in turn led to the international community's providing substantial assistance to the earthquake victims. My country is also grateful to the international community for their support and succour in our difficult times.

The earthquake in India has underlined how urgent it is for Habitat to design and construct low-cost, earthquake-resistant and weatherproof housing in developing countries. We hope that the international community will rally round the United Nations agency concerned in supporting action in this regard.

My delegation is aware of the United Nations high level of commitment in the areas mentioned, but at the same time we should like clear distinctions to be drawn with a view to defining the relationship between the imperatives of peace-keeping and peacemaking on the one hand and, on the other, the principles of humanitarian access, which are, primarily, neutrality and impartiality.

Countries would be much better served if the United Nations system could assist at the country level with effective early-warning systems and assessment capacities, facilitating preventive action for early response by the affected country itself.

National capabilities must be consciously strengthened with a view to meeting humanitarian requirements in a cost-effective manner and on a well-prioritized basis. My delegation appreciates the efforts already under way, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, and will welcome any new initiative for strengthening national capacities in the area of disaster management and humanitarian coordination.

In all these areas and in all these efforts, my delegation would seek to emphasize the importance of clarifying the relationship between conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance.

My delegation congratulates the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Under-Secretary-General Eliasson on the accomplishments during the last year. However, we would be failing in our duty as a Member State if we did not draw attention to the problems that have arisen whenever the distinction between conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance has been overlooked. In this connection, while reasserting our commitment to all United Nations activities in the area of humanitarian assistance based on mandated General Assembly resolutions, we should like once again to reaffirm the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and the importance of providing humanitarian assistance with the consent of the affected country.

My delegation looks forward to further cooperation with the United Nations system in the field of humanitarian assistance.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): It has become commonplace to mention the end of the cold war as a turning-point in world affairs, a moment when the expectation that cooperation would prevail over conflict arose as a consequence of the demise of sterile confrontation between rival ideological blocs. Had that expectation been more than an illusion, we could be experiencing the benefits that would result from a concerted focus on raising the living standards of each and every human being, particularly the most disadvantaged.

The moment when that vision can be realized continues to fade into the future, and, in the meanwhile, we are forced to spend our energies on enhancing palliative measures to the detriment of permanent solutions. And to compound the folly of this short-sighted outlook, the violent forces of nature are taking an ever-increasing toll through a growing number of disasters.

In the context of those disasters, we are indebted to Ambassador Jan Eliasson for his untiring efforts; his commitment and dedication have made it possible to strengthen the coordination of United Nations activities in the field of humanitarian assistance.

The report before us underlines the magnitude of the problem we face, with 108 sudden natural disasters and 26 complex emergencies over the last two years. We concur with the conclusion that the validity of resolution 46/182 in providing the framework for coordinating relief assistance has been demonstrated by experience to date.

The most notable accomplishment of resolution 46/182 is the establishment of the guiding principles for providing humanitarian assistance. Through extensive and constructive debate, a consensus agreement was reached on the framework within which such assistance should be extended, in response to requests from governments, for the relief of populations suffering the consequences of natural disasters and other emergencies. Our task, therefore, is not to review the provisions of resolution 46/182 but rather to seek ways of further enhancing, within the established framework, the mechanisms for coordinating humanitarian assistance.

The Economic and Social Council, during the coordination segment of its substantive session this year, considered the issue in detail, and has adopted a set of agreed conclusions to this end.

At this point, I think it would be very useful if we could clarify the exact nature of those agreed conclusions. As my delegation pointed out during the Second Committee's debate on agenda item 12, agreed conclusions

represent a clear set of directives to the system that have evident legislative authority. To propose, however, that such conclusions represent a precedent for selectively altering the delicate balance of resolution 46/182 would seriously undermine the concept, as we would have to revert to lengthy, word-by-word negotiations on the outcome of the coordination segment, thus sacrificing the evident progress represented by the innovative mechanism of agreed conclusions.

In his report, the Secretary-General has outlined some of the difficulties encountered and has proposed, for consideration by the General Assembly, some measures for strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, on which I should like to comment.

One area of particular concern, as is evident from the report, lies in the mechanisms for funding humanitarian assistance.

The first aspect relates to the volume of resources available for emergency response through the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). There is apparent progress in the agility of the Fund in disbursing resources in a timely manner; we encourage further effort to ensure that resources are available in the field as quickly as possible, for the initial phase is the most critical in the onset of emergencies.

The problem resides in the reimbursements to the Fund, which have on average taken six to eight months - a factor which is straining the capacity of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to respond to new emergencies, with the available resources currently at the level of $19 million. This problem could become even worse if the scope of the Fund is expanded.

The remedy proposed by the Secretary-General is an increase in the size of the Fund. Donor countries, on the other hand, are of the view that more timely reimbursements would maintain the Fund at adequate levels. Both propositions would significantly strengthen the Fund's ability to respond to emergencies, though both depend on a firm commitment of donors, either by contributing additional voluntary resources to the Fund or by speeding up the processes for responding to consolidated appeals and thus making possible prompt reimbursements to the Fund. It would seem to us, however, that increasing the size of the Fund would be a more practical solution, as it would address the issue on a more permanent basis, without the need for a constant struggle to keep reimbursements up to date.

Another difficulty encountered, according to the report, is the lack of funding to support field-level coordinating arrangements and for the Emergency Relief Coordinator to discharge functions in the early stages of an emergency in regard to which no other operational agency has specific responsibility.

The doubts we expressed at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the arrangements proposed for these issues - most notably allowing the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to draw on CERF - remain. These doubts refer essentially to the potential for undermining CERF, as the reimbursement of funds used to these ends is in no way assured - particularly since the report notes that

> "requests for the funding of field coordination arrangements ... remain the most under-funded components". *(A/48/536, para. 56)*

Additionally, we believe that these measures entail the risk that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would increasingly take over operational functions, thereby losing its main comparative advantage in the coordination of humanitarian assistance - namely, that of not competing directly with agencies on an operational level. We therefore consider that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, bringing together agencies and organizations working at the field level, is the most appropriate forum for deliberating on and presenting recommendations for addressing this issue.

As for the proposed expansion of the scope of CERF, we share the view that, at this stage, such an expansion should be limited to the International Organization for Migration. We deem it essential, however, that access to CERF resources entail full compliance with financial regulations, particularly with reference to reimbursement, as well as with reference to the leadership role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, so as to ensure the Fund's financial stability and the coordination ends for which it was established.

One of the most critical issues surrounding the humanitarian assistance activities of the United Nations system at present is, as highlighted in the report,

> "the need to define the relationship between the imperatives of peace-keeping and peacemaking and the principles of humanitarian access, neutrality and impartiality". *(A/48/536, para. 45)*

As I stated earlier, the principles established by resolution 46/182 are of paramount importance in guiding all future deliberations on the issue. Among these, the central element is the determination that

"Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality". *(resolution 46/182, annex, para. 2)*

We do not insist on these points only as a matter of abstract legal principle: we insist on them above all because they are concretely essential for ensuring the long-term effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. The irrevocable relevance of the principle of neutrality and impartiality lies in the fact that if those who deliver humanitarian relief were to be perceived as one-sided or as partial, then access to victims of emergencies and the very functioning of relief activities could be severely hampered.

Those guiding principles also call for a guarded approach to the question of the relationship between humanitarian action and initiatives of a political or a military nature. This is, of course, a manifold relationship, as those who are working on the ground will be able to tell us. In particular, it is important to note that the achievements attained in the delivery of humanitarian relief contribute in a significant way to promoting solutions to problems of a political nature. In situations of conflict, the improvement of the humanitarian situation tends to increase confidence between the parties and thus contributes to the success of diplomatic efforts. Moreover, there is an obvious need for coordination of decentralized initiatives undertaken by the United Nations with regard to specific situations, so as to ensure a rational utilization of limited resources.

Nevertheless, recognizing these facts should not lead us to overlook the need for humanitarian action to pursue its own logic, to follow its own drumbeat, in strict accordance with its own guiding principles. An excessive proximity between humanitarian efforts and political efforts is not in the interest of either. In the final analysis, the only real guarantee of the effectiveness of humanitarian action is the very legitimacy of such action. The logic that is at work here is that relief action is and must be effective because it is strictly humanitarian, and because it is perceived as strictly humanitarian. Thus, while humanitarian action by the United Nations can and must take advantage of the resources of the Organization, including in the area of peace-keeping, it must not be made contingent on initiatives of a political nature, let alone on the use of military force.

I would like to conclude by expressing the Brazilian Government's appreciation to the men and women who are working every day, with anonymous devotion, often in extremely difficult and dangerous situations, to bring relief to those who are in need. These men and women deserve our wholehearted gratitude and our constant support. Brazil will continue to work, in the General Assembly and in other forums, to contribute to improving conditions so that their noble work can be carried out in safety and dignity.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.